

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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R 280851Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2414

S E C R E T JAKARTA 1239

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, ID, PO, PT, AS

SUBJECT: TIMOR AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO INDONESIA

1. FOLLOWING MY RETURN I HAVE EXAMINED CURRENT SITUATION RELATING TIMOR AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. FOLLOWING IS MY EVALUATION:
2. SEPTELS WILL REPORT ON MY CONVERSATIONS WITH AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR WOOLCOTT AND FOREIGN MINISTER MALIK. THESE TALKS AND OTHER INFORMATION SUGGEST CONSOLIDATION INDONESIAN POSITION AND FORMAL ACT OF SELF-DETERMINATION LIKELY REQUIRE SEVERAL MONTHS. SIMILARLY UN REPRESENTATIVE FEELS UNDER NO STRONG PRESSURE FILE HIS REPORT AND MAY DELAY IN ORDER PERMIT PASSIONS ON ISSUE TO SETTLE. WE CANNOT, THEREFORE, COUNT ON ANY EARLY CONSPICUOUS ACTION RESULTING IN WITHDRAWAL OF INDONESIAN FORCES AND EXPRESSION OF WILL BY PEOPLE OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR.
3. AT SAME TIME, AS SEEN FROM JAKARTA, WE HAVE SOME LEEWAY IN HANDLING MILITARY ASSISTANCE TRANSACTIONS. WE ARE UNAWARE ANY GRANT TRANSACTION LIKELY REQUIRE FORMAL WASHINGTON ACTION IN NEAR FUTURE. FIRST ISSUE LIKELY TO ARISE IS FMS CREDIT FOR SIKORSKI HELICOPTERS PURCHASE. WE UNDERSTAND FROM

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HANKAM THAT INDONESIAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON HAS BEEN INFORMED

THAT FMS CREDIT PURCHASE POSSIBLE ON TERMS OF FIVE YEARS WITH 7.75 PERCENT INTEREST. WHILE INTEREST RATE FITS GOI GUIDELINES, PAYBACK TERMS MAY CAUSE PROBLEMS AND WILL IN ANY EVENT REQUIRE APPROVAL OF MINISTERS OF FINANCE AND ECONOMY (BAPPENAS). SIKORSKI HAS EXTENDED DEADLINE FOR SIGNING CONTRACT TO MID-MARCH. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, GOI POSTPONING ACTION ON PSMMS AND OTHER HELICOPTERS PENDING PASSAGE SECURITY ASSISTANCE APPROPRIATIONS. OTHER FMS CASE LIKELY ARISE INVOLVES PURCHASE OF TWO LPRS. LETTER OF OFFER EXPECTED IN MARCH 1976 AFTER REQUIREMENT FOR CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION SATISFIED.

4. IT IS POSSIBLE GOI COULD REPLY ON SIKORSKI HELICOPTERS THROUGH GENERAL NICHLAN AND ISSUE COULD BE JOINED SOONER THAN WE EXPECTED. THERE MAY BE OTHER TRANSACTIONS OF WHICH WE ARE NOT AWARE. AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, IT WOULD APPEAR HERE THAT WE HAVE BREATHING SPACE BEFORE DECISIONS OR ACTIONS REQUIRED UNDER EITHER MAP OR FMS.

5. WHILE INDONESIANS (IN HANKAM AND GENERAL MURTOPO'S CENTER) AWARE OF SENATOR HART'S LETTER AND DOD REPLY, QUESTION OF POSSIBLE DELAYS IN SECURITY ASSISTANCE ACTIONS HAS NOT BEEN RAISED BY INDONESIANS. QUESTION WAS RAISED BY AUSTRALIAN DCM WITH CHARGE AND, AS REPORTED IN SEPTEL, BY AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR WITH ME. RUMORS OF SUSPENSION OR DELAYED ACTION COULD SPREAD BUT FOR MOMENT QUESTION APPEARS NOT TO BE ACTIVE. ACCORDINGLY, I DO NOT INTEND, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY QUERIED, TO VOLUNTEER TO INDONESIAN LEADERSHIP CURRENT SITUATION ARISING FROM USE OF U.S. ARMS IN TIMOR. SHOULD DEVELOPMENTS IN WASHINGTON CHANGE THIS, I WOULD APPRECIATE URGENT WARNING. IN SUCH CASE, I WOULD WISH INFORM SUDHARMONO OR APPROPRIATE OFFICIAL OF HANKAM OF PROBLEM WE FACE AND MANNER IN WHICH WE ARE SEEKING TO HANDLE SITUATION.

6. GIVEN LIKELIHOOD THAT WE WILL NOT HAVE CLEAR ACT OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN NEAR FUTURE, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD RESPOND ANY FURTHER CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY BY ACKNOWLEDGING, AS WE ALREADY HAVE DONE, USE OF AMERICAN ARMS AND INDICATING THAT WE ARE STUDYING APPROPRIATE ACTION IN LIGHT THESE

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CIRCUMSTANCES AND IMPORTANCE OUR RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA. BELIEVE WE CAN USEFULLY USE ARGUMENT THAT INDONESIA FACED WITH DIFFICULT SITUATION ON FRONTIER, THAT PATIENCE WAS EXERCISED AND STRONG EFFORTS MADE CONTINUE PORTUGUESE INVOLVEMENT UNTIL SITUATION HAD SERIOUSLY DETERIORATED. INDONESIA IS COOPERATING WITH UNITED NATIONS TO FIND APPROPRIATE BASIS FOR FUTURE STATUS OF FORMER COLONY.

7. I HAVE INSTRUCTED LIMITED NUMBER OF MY STAFF INVOLVED
IN THIS ISSUE OF EXTREME SENSITIVITY THIS SUBJECT AND
FACT THAT COMMUNICATIONS CONCERNING IT SHOULD BE MADE
ONLY IN THIS CHANNEL.
NEWSOM

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INDEPENDENCE, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, CAT-C, CHEROKEE 01/28/76, POLITICAL SITUATION, SELFDETERMINATION, MILITARY SALES, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976JAKART01239
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: JAKARTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760114/aaaaamby.tel
Line Count: 120
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAY 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <25 MAY 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TIMOR AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO INDONESIA
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, ID, PO, PT, AS, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006